

INTER NOS

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Editorial

Our December issue of **Inter Nos** presents as its opening feature a Christmas play, written last year by two of our postulants for presentation in the novitiate. Copy was not available when the December 1951 number was sent to the press, but we thought it worthy to be held over for our readers.

As the September number was reserved for contest prize winners, we were obliged to delay publication of some interesting material previously received. We trust these contributors will not have forgotten their brain children.

Rummagees, do you recognize yourselves among the actors in Frances Taylor's comedy (or tragedy)?

As the season of Advent draws toward its close, it is fitting that **Inter Nos** offer the good wishes of the President and Faculty to its subscribers, to students, their parents, friends, the Guild and our Alumnae. May Christmas and each day of the New Year be marked by special blessings. During this precious time with its cheer of the holiday season, let us keep ever before us the source and the true meaning of Christ-Mass.

Come then each lover of Bethlehem's Babe
Lift up your voice and sing
With peace in your soul
With joy in your heart
On the birthday of Christ the King.

Sister M. Dolorosa

Suffer The Little Ones

By Mary Lewis and Mary Farley

ACT I

Curtain opens on a caravan preparing to stop for night. Characters on stage: TOBIAS, JOHN, NATHAN, FAMILY, ANNA.

ACT I, SCENE I

TOBIAS: Knowing these parts for years, I would warn you to end our day's journey here. The curve ahead leads down a rugged slope, which would be much better to travel in light.

PETER: That's right, Tobias—why, I heard at the old inn where we stopped yesterday that no smart person would go beyond the curves without the best animals. Andrew, didn't you hear him say that but two days ago a caravan missed the right trail and barely escaped death for all because of the dangerous crags.

ANDREW: And not only that but what was left in their caravan was looted by robbers!

NATHAN: These few trees will offer a little protection from the desert wind. Peter, hurry there with the bedding while I get the food out.

JOHN: It was very kind of you to pick me up on the way yesterday, but I don't want to trouble you further, so good-bye and perhaps if you stop at the next inn I will see you there.

ESTHER: Oh, you can't go—why you might be killed!

JOHN: My master expects me back at the inn. . . . There is much work to be done for there are many travelers on the road.

TOBIAS: Countless families are returning to the cities of their birth to enroll in the census of Caesar Augustus.

JACOB: I will be glad when I reach your master's inn myself. This sleeping on rocks and eating such tasteless and plain food is not my idea of good living.

TOBIAS: Do not complain, my good man; you will be rewarded, for these days will bring Someone Great to our land. You have heard: "A man of the tribe of Juda and of the family of Jesse will be born of a Virgin, in Bethlehem in the sixty-ninth week of years after the prophecy of Daniel."

JOHN: How true, how true! You speak of the long awaited Messiah. He shall be such a wonderful King!

JACOB: We have been waiting for a Messiah for hundreds of years and we surely hope that is true.

JOHN: I have heard the wonderful story of His coming. Do you know that He will sit on the throne of David our father?

CELIA: I love the story of our kings, but how do you know about them? Please tell me.

JOHN: My master will be expecting me, but that I may share the joyful story with you, I will stay. (*as an afterthought*) Besides you are right about the dangers ahead, and probably I would be forced to find shelter until the morning.

RUTH: Celia, he is going to tell us a story—a true story. Don't you love stories?

CELIA: Yes, let us hurry with these pans, so we can hear it soon.

PETER: Do you want to help me feed the donkeys, John? I suppose you take care of many of them.

JOHN: Yes, quite often, particularly at this time of year—but, the sheep and especially the lambs are my dear friends. (*They walk off stage*)

ESTHER: How is that fire coming?

ANNA: The log is beginning to burn for I see some sparks. This pot does not cook the food nearly so well as the ones at home. My lady, for such inconvenience, I will prepare the best dinners for you upon our return.

CELIA: Mother, did you hear what John said about the King?

ESTHER: Yes, my child. Many have spoken of His coming. All know that we surely long for the Promised One.

ANDREW: Father, will not you be proud of me, if I can serve in His army instead of the present army?

JACOB: Son, you must give every respect to our Emperor, but none the less (*with emphasis*) I would be proud of you. There exists so much discontent under the present rule.
(*The children talk to each other at one side.*)

RUTH: Celia, do you not think it would be wonderful to be the maiden chosen as His mother?

CELIA: Oh yes, maybe you, or maybe even I could be chosen.

RUTH: Well, maybe *you*, but I think she should have to know the Scriptures better.

CELIA: Oh, I know the Scriptures. They say of her: "Who is she that cometh forth as the morning rising; fair as the moon, bright as the sun, terrible as an army set in array?" If you were called to be the King's mother, Ruth, would you let me visit your royal home?

RUTH: Oh certainly.

ANDREW: Here comes the shepherd boy now.

PETER: Please tell us what the King will do!

JOHN: He shall sit upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom to establish it and strengthen it with judgment, and with justice henceforth and forever..

TOBIAS: You are just a young lad. How do you know so much of the prophets and their writings?

JOHN: My father often read to me of the Messiah. Ever since I was that big (*gesture*) I have been waiting for Him.

PETER: Yes, all Israel waits for the One who will deliver us from the hands of our enemies. He will be a great leader. You may even serve in His army—when you are old enough. You're strong!

JOHN: His army!

NATHAN: Surely, how can the leader deliver us from an enemy without an army, boy?

JOHN: But our father, Isaias, has he not written that the Holy One will come in peace!

NATHAN: You're no coward, boy! Are you afraid to fight? Why, I can see Him now—our Messiah—clad in kingly robes, robes of royal colors leading many divisions and returning our land to its own people once again.

JOHN: I would not be afraid to fight! But I cannot see the Holy One clad in royal robes leading an army! The Son of God would not come to us to fight and kill—

JACOB: This boy is an odd one. He is a poor shepherd, a servant lad, yet he waits for the Son of God as though he were longing for a friend to come!—Enough of the prophets and their writings for tonight. Come—let us retire so that we may start early in the morning.

TOBIAS: You go. I will rest here by the fire for awhile. (*All leave except Tobias and John.*) Stay with me, John, and share my bed this night! "How great are thy works, O Lord, Thou hast made all things in wisdom; the earth is filled with thy riches. Thou hast made the moon for season."

Do not be troubled, my son, by the words of men! Our fathers, the great prophets have all written that the Son of the Most High will come in peace and that He will rule all men, rich and poor, justly and well.

JOHN: But do you expect a real King—living in a palace—dressed in robes of splendor? If that is true, then I have been dreaming

idle thoughts for no king would allow a poor boy such as I to see him!

TOBIAS: Do not be discouraged! Men may laugh at your ideas of the Great One to come, but we know that He will be a kind and gentle ruler of Jew and Gentile alike. "He shall feed His flock like a shepherd. He shall gather together the lambs with His arms and shall take them up in His bosom, the Lord, our God." "Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then shall the lame man walk aright and the tongue of the dumb be freed."

JOHN: I can still hope!

TOBIAS: Yes, son, (*thoughtfully*) you can still hope. This night I feel the very peace of His coming. It has done my old heart good this night to speak with you for I have found one who shares my anxiety in awaiting the coming of the Saviour of our people. Come—take my arm—let us rest for the night with our hopes and dreams.

ACT II, SCENE I (an Inn)

FREDERICK: (*full of merriment*) Well, well. It is not everyday that old friends meet. This calls for more celebration.

ISAAC: (*somber*) Well spoken, my good gentleman.

JONATHAN: Solomon—a little service over here. Do you not know that this night calls for merriment?

ISAAC: It is a wonder we find any—under this fine rule.

FREDERICK: Why do you worry, Isaac—make merry tonight. Who knows, tomorrow we may all be victims under Caesar Augustus.

JONATHAN: Oh, let us not even consider such horrors. Why, Solomon (*calling over to him*) you, for one, are a lucky man, aren't you?

ISAAC: Yes, Solomon—you ought to make a fortune this season. Your Inn is full. You will be a prosperous man for life.

SOLOMON: Yes, my good gentleman; if one but had dependable help. That boy should have been here yesterday. I just don't understand, for he is usually so prompt. (*Knock at door*) Martha, Martha. Look to the needs of our guests while I see who is at the door.

MARTHA: Yes, sir. I will bring the bread and wine from the kitchen right away.

SOLOMON: (*returning*) More people seeking room. . . . I hope they find shelter on a night like this.

MARTHA: (*returning from kitchen*) Here you are, Sirs. Will there be anything else?

FREDERICK: That will be fine for now, but maybe a little later we will need more!

JONATHAN: Yes, Yes.

(Another knock at door)

SOLOMON: This doesn't even give one time for breathing. If only that boy were back! *(John enters with Jacob, Esther and children)* Well John, it is about time you were returning to your duties. *(Solomon says this harshly and then changes his tone when he sees the prosperous family)* Oh, oh—welcome guests!

JACOB: This kind lad of yours has directed us here where we might find lodging this night.

ISAAC: Ah—and prosperous looking, too.

FREDERICK: Solomon will surely find room for these folk!

JONATHAN: Come gentlemen—let us settle upstairs for a game to end a perfect evening. *(They leave the stage)*

JOHN: *(to Solomon)* Sir, I'm sorry if I inconvenienced you by my delay. It's that—*(interrupted by Solomon)*

SOLOMON: Do not be concerned, I am sure it was unavoidable. Now, about our guest's animals.

(Nathan and Tobias enter)

NATHAN: We have fed the animals and found stalls for them in your stable.

JOHN: Excuse me, sir, I will see that they have water.

NATHAN: Oh, they can wait for that. We have all evening.

JOHN: *(rushing to the door)* But they must be thirsty after such a long journey. *(He goes out)*

JACOB: He is a queer lad. I do not understand him. He treats the animals like brothers.

PETER: Yes, he is unusual, but a good sort. *(He is interrupted by Andrew)*

ANDREW: And he does know wonderful stories about kings.

JACOB: *(disgusted)* Do not listen to him. He is only a simple lad and you have your honor and our name to think about.

(They are seated around a table and the children on the ground around the floor)

ESTHER: That is right. The boy is poor and a dreamer but we must be kind to the poor. Everywhere is to be seen hunger, cold, and privations of every kind. It is a pity!

JACOB: Just think of the people we have passed on our journey—

ESTHER: Why, just this evening in the bitter cold, we passed three families. I just can't forget that one couple . . . her face . . . it

had about it a sublime dignity as though she were the daughter of a king . . . her eyes . . . shone with an angelic look . . . and yet she was clothed in the garments of the lowly.

JACOB: And did you notice the man!

ESTHER: Yes, Jacob, he looked on her with such tender love, that it reminded me of our own early days together.

CELIA: O Mother, I surely hope the new King will help them.

ESTHER: Yes—let that be our prayer tonight that our new King will distribute his wealth to help such needy people—

SOLOMON: Sir, if you do not mind a few crowded conditions, I will show you where you may rest for the night.

CELIA: Father, are we going to stay here long?

JACOB: Just for tonight, I hope! (*They leave the stage. Martha and Tobias remain. Martha begins clearing the things from the table*) (*At this point John returns from the stable*)

JOHN: Here, Martha, let me help you. (*He immediately begins clearing table.*)

MARTHA: You brought some fine folk to the Inn, John. The master is pleased and yet it means more work. There is much to be done in the kitchen.

JOHN: I will do the dishes and pans, Martha. You are tired!

MARTHA: You have many things to do yourself, boy—outside caring for the animals and the stable to be kept clean.

JOHN: That is nothing! I shall finish shortly and then do the kitchen work! (*He then turns to Tobias*) Tobias, the stars are shining with glory I never saw before. The night is so quiet. It seems as if the earth awaits the coming of the Promised One. (*excited*) Could this be the night He will be born to us in Bethlehem?

MARTHA: (*looks up startled*) Where do you get these thoughts?

TOBIAS: He is right, Martha—the mercy of God is nigh. “Drop down dew, ye heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain the just; let the earth be opened, and bud forth a Saviour.” (*Martha leaves with the dishes, etc.*)

JOHN: (*moving close to Tobias*) You know, Tobias, I hope He does come soon. I have a gift that I made for Him from the softest wool of my lambs.

TOBIAS: Why, John! What is this gift you have?

JOHN: It is but a small gift for an Infant King, but it is all I have. You see, Tobias, the night is so cold, I thought He might need the warmth of this coverlet. (pause) But if it is true, that He will have great wealth, I fear my gift is very poor.

TOBIAS: Fear not, my son—for the wealth He treasures is a humble heart. Whether the giver is a wealthy merchant, a landowner or a poor shepherd lad, His justice rules and He will be pleased with your gift.

JOHN: (*excited*) Oh, do you really think He will—

TOBIAS: Your coverlet of lamb's wool will surely please Him.
(*Tobias puts his hand on John's head as John kneels by him.*)
May the Messiah Himself give you the blessing of His peace.
(*Here Solomon enters with Nathan*)

SOLOMON: (*to Nathan*) There is an old lantern in the stable. John can get it so you may unload the belongings quickly. No one wants to be out long this night.

NATHAN: I, for one, am glad to have lodgings.

SOLOMON: Why, just early this evening a man and his young wife from Nazareth were seeking room. He seemed concerned as it was then late and he had not found shelter for his wife. Too bad we could not accommodate them. Perhaps if they had been a little more prosperous-looking, shall we say?—we could have found space for them! (*little laugh*) Anyway, I suggested our stable at the edge of town and he gratefully thanked me!

JOHN: (*to himself*) This is no night to spend in that old stable. The wind will whistle through the cracks! The lady could have had my bed. I would not mind sleeping on the floor!

SOLOMON: Come, John, stop your dreaming. Bring some more wood for the fire when you come from the stable.

JOHN: Oh, I did sir! I saw the pile was growing low and I cut more and filled the wood-box! It should be sufficient to keep the fire burning through the night. Will you be wanting anything else tonight, sir?

SOLOMON: No, but don't go too far. The animals may need some care tonight.

JOHN: (*To himself*) The animals have a warm stall—yet the stable where the strangers are spending the night is bleak and cold!

ACT II SCENE II

John is seen slowly walking from the Inn

JOHN: (*spoken in a meditative tone*) The Lady—she will be so cold. If only I could help her. (*Pause*) My coverlet. But that is my gift for the Infant King, and I have nothing else to give Him, but the lady—He will understand and I can give Him another and even more beautiful one. If only I can find her!

(*An angel appears, slowly moving toward him.*)

JOHN: Who are you?

ANGEL: Fear not, for behold I bring you tidings of great joy, that shall be to all the people, for this day is born to you a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord, in the city of David. And this shall be a sign unto you. You shall find the Infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger."

JOHN: Our Saviour—in a stable! (*with great wonderment*)

ANGEL: You will please the lady and your Infant King—for she is His Mother. You must go quickly and announce His tidings and then come and adore Him.

JOHN: Oh, our King! The Messiah! He has come; He has come.
Tobias—Tobias. (*John runs from the stage shouting these words.*)

ACT II SCENE III

The curtain opens on the Nativity Scene. John and Tobias enter, followed by others.

John kneels by the entrance and Mary looks up at him. He then moves toward her and kneels by the Infant.

JOHN: My lady, this is for your little Son. (*He hands her the coverlet. Mary smiles and graciously, takes it and puts it around the Infant. She holds her Son for John to see.*)

JOHN: Oh, He has such a heavenly smile. (*Turning to Tobias*) Isn't He wonderful!

TOBIAS: I bless the Lord that I have seen such things—"A light shall shine upon us this day: for Our Lord is born to us; and He shall be called Wonderful, God, the Prince of Peace, the Father of the world to come of whose reign there shall be no end."

CELIA: Mother, see the baby hands!

ESTHER: His hands outstretched to bless the world, and it receives Him not.

JACOB: Bless the mercy of the Lord Who has shown us the error of our ways and has given to us, poor sinners, the Light of the World. What gift can I give to my King?

TOBIAS: Come as a child, Jacob, as this child, (*putting his hand on John's shoulder*)—and give Him your heart.

(Those behind the scenes and the angels, gathered about the Crib sing praises to the newborn King)

A Letter From Greece

By Mary Alice Connors
An Alumna

July 24, 1952

DEAR SISTER,

I guess it's about time I got around to acknowledging your note of last January or so. My mother had forwarded it to me at Washington.

Somehow, I feel this will be a long letter. This job and the country are both so interesting to me that I feel it would interest others also. You are my target for the day.

First, some background: I applied for the Foreign Service of the Department of State in October, 1951, and after due processing and investigations was sworn in on February 6, 1952. Left Washington, D.C. on March 19, 1952 and arrived here in Athens, Greece on March 20. Incidentally, I had no choice of posts; just went where they sent me. Through some quirk I was assigned to the Political Section (rather than Economic) as a clerk-stenographer, but I am happy here as the work and people are very interesting.

Actually, I should think it would be rather depressing working in the economic section. Greece as a whole is a very poor country and one of the participants in our M.S.A. program. Athens and a few other principal cities are modern, but the rural areas are almost primitive and very poor. There is such a difference between the cities and the country. Farmers dress and work the land as they did a thousand years ago. A difference, also, is the cost of living which in Athens itself equals that of Washington, D.C. Inflation is terrific; the rate of exchange is 15,000 drachmae to \$1. Athenian food, clothing and shelter prices are very high. Even considering the fact that prices to Americans are double that to Greeks, the Greeks still pay exorbitant prices. It is a wonder to me how people survive at all, but of course that accounts for the four classes of people here—rich, middle, poor, and beggars. But on the other hand prices for services are very low. A streetcar ride is 500 drs.; renting a dressing room at the beach is 5000 drs.; a maid is about \$30 a month; and, oh, yes, flowers are extremely cheap, I bought about four dozen carnations for 5000 drachmae. So you see, this is a country of paradoxes.

Roman Catholics are definitely in the minority. About 97% of the people are Greek Orthodox, of course. (An interesting sidelight: did you know that it is prohibited by law for the Greek Orthodox priests to try to convert people to their religion?) There are three places in Athens and vicinity where Catholics may attend Mass; one is a Cathedral in town, second is the chapel of the Jesuit high

school in Athens, third is at the Semiramis Hotel (where I live) in Kifissia, a suburb of Athens. I usually attend at the hotel, because it is so handy; and this month I have charge of the altar—setting it up, taking it down, and washing the linens, etc. There is a surprising number of American Catholics here. (Another sidelight: last Sunday I met an American Jesuit scholastic who is visiting Greece for the summer and studying at Oxford the rest of the year who knows Margie O'Hanlon's brother, in fact came across with him two years ago, or so. He is from Chicago.)

Believe it or not, I am beginning to pick up a little of the Greek language. At first I felt like kicking myself because I never learned the alphabet, but now I can figure out the sounds of the letters even though I don't know their names. As you know, Greek is so different from any other language that one cannot listen and pick out words from similar ones in English or Spanish, for example. I've learned many necessary nouns and expressions; eventually I hope to learn some verbs. The people are very helpful; they will tell you the correct way to say something and never laugh at your clumsy attempts.

The political picture is quite interesting, also. Having lived all my life in a democracy, I had heard and read about monarchies; and here I am in the thick of one. King Paul and Queen Frederika are very popular; she seems to have as much say in matters as he does. There are three major political parties—Liberal, EPEK, and Rally—and numerous other ones with a few seats in Parliament. The EPEK Party, headed by Prime Minister Plastiras (who is in France recovering from an illness) has a one-seat majority in Parliament. Liberal, headed by Sophocles Venizelos, is next; then comes the Rally, headed by Marshal Papagos who is maneuvering for another election which he thinks his party will win so he can be Prime Minister and clean up the country. In the meantime several of the small parties are trying to find a common meeting point so they can present some sort of threat to the existing government. Over all still hangs the threat of communism, which group every once in a while shows its hand at some trickery. For example, when General Ridgway of NATO fame was expected the other day, a Communist flag was found waving from the top of the Tameion Building, where part of the American Mission is located, and many leaflets saying "Out of Greece you murderer of the Korean people" were spread round the city. Feelings toward the Americans range from idolization, through lukewarm to strong dislike. But the fact remains that it is our money which is putting Greece back on its feet.

You would probably think that being over here in Europe I would have had much chance for travel, but that is not the case. Roads are bad and air travel is very sketchy, so the best way to get around is by sea. And even though it may not look it on the map,

there is quite a distance between here and Rome, for example, or Paris, or London. But we do have enjoyable times cruising around the different Greek islands. Actually, so far I have taken just two cruises, one through the Peloponnesus and one to the island of Rhodes where one of the seven ancient wonders of the world, the Colossus, used to be. I plan to save my time (we rate thirteen days a year annual leave) and money for a tour of Europe next summer.

If things go according to schedule, I will be going home in March, 1954. In the meantime I hope to issue communiques to you now and then. And by the way, if you or any of the nuns would like any sort of material on Greece for teaching or general information use, please let me know and I'll be happy to supply you. Having the privilege of the Army Post Office makes mailing things very simple and inexpensive. Please give my regards to the rest of the Mount Staff.

Yours truly,

MARY ALICE CONNORS

LEVEL PLAINS

By Mary Jo Rennison

*Rain falls. Clouds, misty, move
In gentle breezes that drift with heaven's tears.
The road is ever upward, long and hard,
Clouds hang heavy over human hearts.
There is no waiting for a clear, blue dawn,
Seconds fall like raindrops, here—then gone,
They tear and beat at human frailties.
The wind whips by, and the years.
Grace lights the tired soul in darkest days;
Time storms on and up the edge of every year.
And yet a little, a very little while,
The summit will be won, and there, and onward,
Level plains of God's eternity.*

RUMMAGE . . . Animal, Vegetable, and Mineral

By Frances Taylor

The basements in the City of San Francisco, I feel quite certain, must be the cleanest, the neatest, and the emptiest of any city in the whole world. Why? Very simple—rummage sales! Not a single week passes by that some organization, with lowly object—money, does not schedule one of these orgies; and where does rummage normally come from if not from basements?

The seemingly most unlikely dust-gatherers, in quantity, are quickly convertible at these sales into almost fabulous amounts in the short space of two or three days. Many volumes have been written about the various aspects of "fascinating San Francisco," but no one has yet, literally speaking, explored its basements. To do this remains for me.

My interests went underground in such wise. Looking from a bus window early one Saturday morning, I saw a large gathering of people around the entrance of a certain auditorium in Civic Center. The hour, the location, the size and kind of crowd could mean only one thing—there must be a rummage sale in the offing. I made a quick decision. My errand in town could well be postponed while I satisfied a latent desire to participate in one of these affairs. I signaled the bus to stop, alighted, walked with hurried step for a short stretch, and joined the group.

Notice that I walked with hurried step. I was probably already too late. It was nearly eight o'clock and the sales usually begin about nine o'clock, but in order to find standing room within a half block of the entrance, one must arrive at least two hours prior to scheduled opening time. Once having identified myself with the crowd, belatedly or not, I began to look about to take note of the kind of people who attend these events.

One thing was immediately apparent. All were more or less acquainted with one another and the conversation was concerned with the bargains of other sales of other weeks. They were habitués—I was definitely an outsider. Something else also set me apart from these people. They were both dressed and armed for the occasion—dressed down, shall we say, rather than dressed up. If they were all very poor, and I doubted it, they were in character; if not, they were in the garb appropriate to digging up the back yard or overhauling the car. I was in ordinary street clothes suitable for visiting the better stores, but I felt as conspicuous as if I were in a backless formal at a funeral parlor. And as for being armed—

each one was provided with a capacious shopping bag, gunny sack, or carton for quickly gathering the plunder. Their trucks, no doubt, were standing by for the larger and heavier booty.

Some persons I readily identified as dealers, others as the genuinely needy, still others as characters of one sort or another. And having generally catalogued my companions, I made a resurvey for the purpose of finding a suitable person with whom to converse and thereby pass the time yet remaining before the portals would be opened and the wonders that lay beyond revealed. Behind me was a lady who appeared to be quite genteel, if not well dressed, and she, too, was lacking a partner for conversational purposes. I made an opening remark. She co-operated. By nine o'clock we had become fairly well acquainted and I had learned a great deal concerning rummage sales.

My newly found companion was no novice in the field of rummage—she had been attending sales for thirty years, largely in the interest of charity, partly because it had become virtually a hobby. With a little encouragement from me, she delved into rummage lore and delighted me with much that was odd and interesting.

She explained that the people with whom I was then rubbing elbows could be classified readily into well defined groups. There were the dealers who conduct secondhand stores in the poorer districts of the City and who are direct lineal descendants of Shylock, endowed with the additional accomplishments of sleight of hand and pocket picking. She warned me to clutch my purse tightly and under no circumstances to lay it down—or, for that matter, anything else portable. Here I shall add with more candor than delicacy, but it is essential to the atmosphere of the event, and I say atmosphere advisedly, that many of this type of neighbor were not devotees of the bath. Then there were rooming housekeepers who have a nose for old furniture, tired curtains, battered kitchen utensils, and other articles of questionable value. Henceforth, if you ever have occasion to rent a furnished room, you can sympathize with that weary look worn by the furniture, knowing that it has a past. Others, she indicated, were persons of wealth who were attending for the ignoble purpose of seeing how much they could buy for how little—and they would drive a bargain second only to the dealers' in shrewdness. Others in the group represented people with hobbies who sought materials which they could work over in the pursuit of their avocations. Still others were seekers for pieces of pewter, cut glass, teapots, bottles of odd shapes, or other items with which to amplify a collection of some kind. And, of course, there were the poor, whom we will have always with us, and whom rummage sales are, in the last analysis, intended to help.

My informant brought out the point that rummage sales are eminently successful in San Francisco where there is an average

of one or two a week, and that not infrequently as much as four thousand dollars is realized in three days. She also familiarized me with the fact that the money is always devoted to some noble purpose such as a scholarship fund, boy or girl scout work, or replenishment of the treasury of a society which directly aids the poor. But regardless of the motive, rummage sales have become a favorite indoor sport and are patronized by all whose occupations afford them the leisure to attend. In other words, many people make a career of rummaging and, I can tell you now, it's fun.

I encouraged my companion to tell me some of her most interesting experiences and I was rewarded by this little gem. About twenty years ago she had attended a certain sale, at the conclusion of which the management found itself still possessed of forty-eight new stoves, unsold and unwanted. Rental of quarters for a rummage sale always presupposes the restoration of the premises to original condition, so . . . what to do with the forty-eight stoves? They were knocked down to five dollars each. Still no one was interested. Finally, they were offered for one dollar each *provided*, however, that the purchaser would take the entire *forty-eight*. The temptation to help her charities was now too great, so she eagerly contracted for this large consignment. Her first enthusiasm was somewhat dampened, however, by a practical-minded person standing nearby who informed her that the drayage for each stove would cost far in excess of its purchase price. After a moment of desperate thought, she fled to a 'phone and called the Saint Vincent de Paul Society. "I have twenty-four brand new stoves to donate to your cause if you will arrange to call for them. Are you interested?" Response was enthusiastic and affirmative so half the battle was won. A similar call to the Goodwill Industries was productive of a similar result. So that was that—for the time being.

Twenty years later, the St. Vincent de Paul Society held open house for the purpose of publicizing its good work, and two prominent radio personalities lent their presence as host and hostess. The donor of the stoves attended this event and was a member of a group being conducted through the plant by an elderly employee when a spectator inquired, "Do you recall any interesting happenings during your many years with St. Vincent de Paul?" "Well, yes," answered the old man after a moment's thought. "I remember about twenty years ago, a lady telephoned to offer us twenty-four brand new stoves if we would arrange to call for them. Do you know, we eventually sold each one of those stoves for twenty-five dollars? God bless that lady!"

It wasn't quite nine o'clock yet, so I pressed for more. Then she briefed me on what to look for in customer behavior. Dealers, she emphasized, will haggle for a single cent. They will concentrate on certain items, get the price down to a desirable minimum of five cents, then make the sad discovery that their purse yields only

four cents. Alas! Can't they possibly have it for four cents? Then it becomes an endurance contest between customer and saleslady and "the winnah" is the one who has the most patience or the most time—usually the crusty customer. And bear in mind that this is the climax of a deal involving not one, but perhaps several, items of more or less repairable value. Later on the same dealer suddenly comes upon another dime in the deep recesses of his purse, and he begins the process all over again by concentration on some other object or objects which have fascinated his mercenary imagination.

The dealers do not enjoy a monopoly of the questionable dealings, however, she assured me. She had been the silent witness to the clever purloin of a pair of slacks. A potential customer requested, logically enough, the privilege of fitting the slacks before purchasing. The permission was readily granted, the woman stepped behind a stack of boxes, and presently sailed forth with the regretful observation that the slacks were not the correct size. She went on her way and the slacks apparently went with her because they were never seen thereafter. Evidently she had slipped them on under her dress and rolled up the legs above the hem. An investigation was unlikely, confiscation was easy.

By this time, the moment had arrived—that hushed moment of expectancy before the doors would be opened and human dignity would be forgotten while men and women rushed like wolves starved for fleshly prey. A police officer opened the door, blew a whistle, and the struggle was on. Have you ever seen the panicky surge toward the door in a theater when someone screams, "Fire!"? If you have been so unfortunate, just multiply that experience tenfold and you will have a vague idea of the behavior of a crowd at a rummage sale. I was swept along by the mob, hammered through the door, and left stranded in the middle of the auditorium while the others fanned out in a race to the various departments. I gazed for several minutes in wide-eyed astonishment at this display of animal behavior in human beings—animals seeking the vegetable and the mineral—secondhand at that.

Having survived the initial shock, I was now "in," one of the brethren, free to look, to bargain, and to buy if I would. So I started on a tour. Here were enough spectacles to keep me busy for a week.

The hat department appealed as being as good as any point of departure for a tour of investigation. So I mingled with the crowd, touching nothing, but watching and listening to everything. Women were shoving each other away from a mirror before which they were trying on millinery creations which had once crowned the heads of wealthy damsels. They were using the same critical care in their selection as, no doubt, the original owners had—and were being assisted by salesladies with the same "you-look-perfectly-stunning-my-dear" technique. There was, however, a slight differ-

ence. There had been a certain degree of depreciation in value, hats which originally had cost the elite a hundred dollars now being purchased by the hoi polloi for fifty cents. Well . . . *Sic transit gloria mundi*.

I overheard one woman say, after careful consideration of a dozen atrocities of equally dubious artistic value, "I believe I'll take this one after all. It doesn't look as well on me as some of the others, but then it has a label from one of the better stores. How much do you want for it?" "Fifty cents, please." The deal was closed.

I moved on to the book department. Here I witnessed a little drama between the saleslady and an elderly man who had just purchased an ancient Bible for the munificent sum of one dollar. He was very happy over his bargain, but he was somewhat aghast at the fact that the book, being of ancient vintage and not printed on onionskin, weighed a good eight or ten pounds. He wanted to know if it couldn't be delivered! The saleslady had to bring to bear the very latest in salesmanship to persuade him that placed on his lap on the bus, all the wisdom contained therein would not render it an insuperable burden.

After he had removed what was perhaps the only holy item in an altogether unholy atmosphere, she told me that the entire book department was in mourning because someone had innocently sold a McGuffey Reader for ten cents when it should have netted a good fifty dollars!

Oddly enough, the department which handles books also displayed eyeglasses, fountain pens, automatic pencils, and *dentures*. (The italics are intentional.)

The eyeglasses included some cute, little, old-fashioned numbers which looked as though they might have been worn by a grand lady or an eccentric professor—you know the kind with dainty chains, and black ribbons—and the lorgnette, and the pince-nez, which bruises the nose as it pinches. These, I am sure, would have delighted the heart of a collector—if any there be of eyeglasses. Then there were the garden variety with conventional rims and lenses ground to cure Aunt Jennie's astigmatism and Uncle Henry's nearsightedness. These, I learned, are attractive to the dealers who purchase them for the salvage value of the rims. A dollar or two will usually buy any pair. Individuals who are contemplating a change in glasses, it seemed, likewise find it economical to purchase rims here for a nominal sum, then present them to their optician for lenses to fit, thereby saving the difference between one or two dollars and fifteen. The opticians are going to hate me for spreading this propaganda!

I eavesdropped while a well dressed, good looking, young woman considered a pair of glasses with heavy metal rims of modern design. The lenses were so powerful that her eyes appeared to be

popping from their sockets while she modeled them. After fingering the pair for a while, she asked first for a mirror, then solicited the saleslady's approval of their becomingness, finally decided to purchase, and removed them from her nose in order to be able to see her purse and to find the money therein. To the unutterable amazement of both the saleslady and me, she paid her two dollars for the glasses, replaced them on her nose, and proceeded to depart, walking with an unsteadiness of gait clearly indicative of the fact that the floor was coming up to meet her at least half way.

Fountain pens and automatic pencils were very attractive to dealers, I observed. And these merchants had a little way with them if not carefully watched. They would quickly separate the caps from the lower parts of the pens, stir into a hopeless mess the apparent incompletes, then offer to buy the entire collection for five or ten cents. As for the pencils, the lead cartridges had a most amazing habit of disappearing before one's very eyes.

And now to clear up about the dentures. I couldn't resist remarking on this unsavory item. Nobody wants to acquire them when they are new—much less so second hand! Besides, I was always under the impression that perfect fit is the essence. However, I was informed that dentures, particularly partial plates constructed with a band to span the roof of the mouth, are greatly sought after by dealers for the gold content. What ghouls! Every time I looked at the grinning things, my stomach did several floors of an elevator act. No wonder it is in the creed of the rummage worker that there is nothing so useless that it cannot be of use to someone.

And so again I moved on. By this time I was thoroughly intrigued, not by the merchandise as such, but by its variety, its condition, its price, and most of all by the humankind it had attracted.

Next, I came upon a monumental pile of shoes—ballet slippers, moccasins, hip boots, bedroom slippers, hiking boots, baby shoes, evening slippers—every conceivable form of footwear in various conditions ranging from the shoe so new that it had obviously been discarded because it had hurt, to the laborer's shoe with plaster clinging to the vamp and dollar-size holes in the sole. Business was very brisk in this quarter so I lingered a moment to see if anything interesting might take place. Shoes were moving out by the gross. It scarcely seemed possible that so many feet could be matched with so many shoes in such short space of time. By now I was feeling more at ease, bashfulness being displaced by interest, so I asked the saleslady in charge of this department if there was anything interesting in the behavior of her clientele. Her reply was a lament over the fact that too many people tried on shoes—self-service, of course—walking out in the rummage model, leaving their old ones behind. And who could prove the crime? Also, she continued, prior to the opening of the sale, hours and hours had been painstakingly spent in tying laces together so as to preserve the

twin personality of pairs of shoes. But one little razor blade could undo so much with one little twist of the wrist. Result? An offer to buy for little or nothing a pile of single shoes which, to all appearances, were of value only to one-legged customers.

And so I wandered on from department to department. Marshall Fields in Chicago could not boast of greater variety—furniture—leather—clothing—bric-a-brac—art—jewelry—notions—fur—musical instruments—household articles—tools. And most of all these wares had one thing in common—a price so low as to delight the heart of a child who had no other resources in the world but the contents of a recently shattered piggy bank.

Incidental items were legion. There was a corset, boned, and stayed, and laced, weighing at least ten pounds, and having a wing spread of about two yards. If the circus were only in town it would most certainly have delighted the heart, and the waist, of the fat lady. Girdles of ordinary proportions were plentiful and, I regret to state, not always too hygienic. They had been too long on the corpus and too long ago in the tub.

In contrast, there was a Satsuma vase which sold for twenty dollars. That sum for the rummage fund seemed munificent, but in proportion to the actual value of the art object, it was only a pittance.

One of the workers informed me, in this connection, that an appraiser from one of San Francisco's leading auction houses is kindly disposed toward the rummage movement and donates his services by appraising items which are suspected by the layman of having value of any appreciable amount. Even this precaution, however, is not proof against costly underestimation because some articles appearing too unworthy even to be submitted to an appraiser later prove to have considerable worth. I was told of an instance where some harmless little figurines were offered for one dollar. A queer-looking old couple scrutinized them very carefully, scratching a corner in their investigative process. Apparently, an odd exterior cloaked honest hearts because they offered twenty-five dollars for the pair. First aid was promptly administered to the saleslady, and after she had been restored to normal, the bargain was closed for twenty-five dollars. Until this day, no one knows to what dynasty the figurines may have belonged, but the story is newsworthy nonetheless.

There were buttons, pieces of lace, ends of ribbon; even lipsticks, powder puffs, half-filled bottles of toilet water; a zither; a back scratcher; canaster sets, pans from which burned dinners had not been completely removed; purses and brief cases in various stages of decomposition; feather beds and pillows; books in quantity to stock a library; rags by the ton; and any number of articles whose origin and purpose were certainly not readily discernible, but which,

nonetheless, were all found by someone to whom they did have a meaning.

After several hours of meandering, meanwhile having lost myself in the ecstatic delight of another world of human beings and another climate altogether, I suddenly bethought myself of my original errand down town. So I made my way to the door, there to be met by two charming women to whom had been assigned the unlovely task of checking out purchases and people, and of relieving customers of any items which could not readily be identified as having been paid for. At this point I found myself in the rather anomalous and unprecedented position of having spent a half day at a rummage sale without making a purchase, while at the same time being in immediate possession of a package which I had intended to exchange at The Emporium! Well, I made the best of an embarrassing situation, willingly proffering my bundle for inspection, accompanied by my lame, though truthful, explanation, and was waived through the portals without further ceremony.

Such was the saga of my attendance at my first rummage sale. I am now a familiar figure at such affairs. I scan the papers eagerly for news of any similar events and if it can be fitted into my schedule, I am outside the doors with the earliest of the customers. And I am now in the position, if I so elect, of taking my turn at entertaining sidewalk neighbors, as we await the grand opening, by my interesting experiences, interspersed with an occasional word of admonition to the unwary.

I could tell, for instance, how the dealers return to the scene three or four times in the course of one day, each time attired in a different garb. The object of this procedure is, of course, to appear as a new customer and perhaps drive a better bargain with another salesperson. One hardened veteran of many a rummage worked tirelessly, according to this technique, in his efforts to purchase a washing machine. The machine, admittedly, was probably one of Leonardo da Vinci's inventions, but it certainly was worth ten dollars. He wanted it for five dollars and schemed toward that end. After several approaches in sundry guises, closing time of the third and concluding day of the sale drew near. This was his opportunity. Some return for the old wreck was better than none; anything was better than having to pay to have it hauled away. So the bargain was struck at a buyer's market—five dollars. What did he do next? March to the hardware department, purchase a screw driver, calmly remove the motor from the old hulk, and stride away, leaving a less than useless carcass to be hauled away for hire!

Akin to this story where, from the purchaser's perspective, the part was greater than the whole, is the one concerning the dealer who coveted a soiled and careworn bear rug which was taking a final beating under the feet of the rummage workers. What the

dealer wanted was not the fur of the animal, but the claws only. These he finally succeeded in procuring for five cents a foot—a claw, that, not a lineal foot—and he proceeded to perform the amputation while the sales personnel picked their steps around him in continuation of their duties. The sixty-four-dollar question is: what could a person do with four lonesome bear claws to which no body is attached?

I am certain that I could hold someone's ear by telling about the picture which nearly cost a poor husband his happy home. He was, perhaps, a bit overzealous in gathering rummage to donate to the cause—or, again, he may have been an opportunist. In any event, he contributed, among sundry items, his mother-in-law's picture, the sole worth of which, to him or anyone else, was its rather valuable frame. Unfortunately or, it may be, fortunately, depending upon the point of view, his wife discovered the crime prior to the opening of the sale, and dispatched him with orders from headquarters to recover the picture. He was among the first to enter the "Art Department" but, alas, just too late. He frantically inquired for the family portrait and was rewarded only by a clue. It had been purchased for two dollars, he learned, by a woman who had, by a fortunate chance, asked regarding the most direct bus to the Mission District. Following the scent, he fled to the corner, boarded the next Mission bus, and watched from the window for any feminine figure bearing a large, square package. Near the end of the line such a person stepped to the sidewalk and proceeded down the street with one worried husband in close pursuit. Having overtaken her, he inquired if she had purchased a picture at the rummage sale. She had. He offered her five dollars. No sale. Ten dollars. Still no sale. Finally, he raised the ante to twenty-five dollars, and it was only after he had explained that his marital happiness was at stake were he not to return his mother-in-law's portrait that the lady relented. "That old hag always did mean nothing in my life but trouble," he muttered as he waited for the return bus home with the offending picture under arm.

Not quite so dramatic, perhaps, but rather interesting were a husband and wife who spent several hours in thorough investigation of old purses and bags. They ultimately purchased a dozen or so, distinguished by broken clasps, missing handles, and other evidences of having earned their retirement. Finally, curiosity transcending courtesy, I refrained no longer from asking why they were investing in such unlikely-looking articles. The wife quickly and logically resolved my puzzlement. Her husband was a leather worker in his spare time and anything made of that material could be converted by his skill, the hardware and fixtures thereon being wholly incidental.

And then there is the short, short story about the young man who visits all the rummage sales with but a single objective—broken

strings of beads, pearls, stones of various kinds, sequins, bits of braid, and pieces of silk. He is in the employ of a costumer and these little things which would seem to have outlived their usefulness are given new life in Queen of Sheba costumes and other oriental creations. Who knows, the unwanted beads and sequins probably go to the circus or tread the boards while some magician pulls the rabbit from the hat or saws the lady in half.

Also, I could warn the neophyte to cling to his belongings as to life. One poor, unsuspecting police officer on duty in the interest of maintaining peace and integrity at the sale hung his raincoat up on a peg. Quite by chance he saw the coat walking out on the shoulders of a young man. Investigation proved that the latter had bought it legitimately enough. An overenthusiastic saleslady had sold it for three dollars, and was obliged to make embarrassing explanations and refund the ill-gotten gain. In the same manner, more than one umbrella has gone home with a different owner on a rainy day.

Sales of this kind are the only ones in which refunds can be made. Believe it or not, a woman demanded a refund on an old suitcase which she had overloaded with kitchen utensils, resulting in a broken handle. The original purchase price was ten cents for one suitcase, but her displeasure was entirely disproportionate to the amount involved. She was assured that neither guarantees nor refunds were the policy of the house.

Customers frequently expect all the extra courtesies rendered by a first-class department store. One service often requested is will-call custody of packages. The usual reward for this kindness is an accusation that some article, which was at no time among the contents of the package, has been stolen. Also, salesladies are often called upon to model hats and dresses. The prospective purchaser, however, fails to recognize the fact that the saleslady may be a petite size twelve while the customer weighs an ample three hundred pounds. Just a small matter. If the customer does recognize the discrepancy, likely as not she will practically demand alterations.

One will-call event was something of a classic. An old, old man, fat and ugly, was attracted by a beautiful, imported, mandarin coat. It was made of brocaded silk, handsomely tailored and lined, probably brought by some traveller from the Orient as a gift to an unappreciative friend. It had not been used and was priced at seven dollars and fifty cents. He toyed with it, and fondled it, and finally modeled it, parading around the center of the hall to the amazement of some and the amusement of others. Finally, he decided that he would like to possess it for his wife, but was hesitant to bind the bargain without her approval. The saleslady was asked and agreed to hold it a specified length of time until the lady would call. Astonishment knew no limitations when the wife finally arrived. She was blonde—pretty, dainty, and young! At this point it is most

difficult to refrain from recitation of a certain old saying about inability to account for individual taste.

My repertoire also includes the story of the two women dealers who bought an old Victrola for two dollars. In investigating their purchase, they discovered an Indian Head penny which they promptly recognized as having a value of about five dollars. The saleslady took advantage of their elation by suggesting that, inasmuch as the sale was for charity, they might appropriately celebrate their good fortune by making a donation. They failed to regard the incident in quite the same light.

Even rummage workers themselves are sometimes newsworthy. One of them told me a little incident concerning her fourteen-year-old boy. She had been gathering discards about the house, and had included, in a box destined for the sale, a number of things which she believed to have lost their fascination for her son. The contents of the box somehow or other diminished in volume. Two days later she gathered the same items and piled them in again. She was about to depart with her plunder when she was confronted by the boy who, with all the dignity he could muster for the occasion, announced: "Mother, if you intend to tour the house for rummage, I think that I am entitled to at least twenty-four hours' notice. After all, there are a few things I would like to keep—if you don't mind!" I have an idea there were certain pieces which didn't quite reach operation rummage.

And my favorite story is illustrative of the fact that effects of the rummage sale extend far beyond walls of the hall within which it is held, beyond the limits of the City of San Francisco, even beyond the confines of our beloved country. One of the ladies, of German ancestry, who labors arduously behind the counter at these sales, has bought, from time to time, large quantities of children's clothing which she has forwarded to Europe to aid the Displaced Persons, particularly those children in the Russian Zone of Germany who were not to be returned to the American Zone unless claimed by relatives. Many times she helped conjure up an Aunt Christine or a Cousin Bertha in order to spirit a homeless orphan to more hospitable lands. One particular little German girl, about fourteen years of age, who had been so befriended, gave eloquent expression of her gratitude by writing a letter of acknowledgment and appreciation. It was written in German, in flawless copy-book script, with marginal illustrations in color. The child had cleverly sketched each garment as it had been received—then the new articles into which she had skillfully converted it. From a coat, she had made a dress; from a sweater, a hat; from a purse, gloves. About a dozen articles had undergone a similar metamorphosis and each was described by a paragraph of witty comment. The letter is a collector's item and is a prize sufficient to inspire anyone to begin forthwith to dispatch packages to Germany. And this is

one item, you may be sure, that the owner will never donate to any future rummage sale!

And so it goes. Scheherazade and the Ancient Mariner would both lose their titles as narrators of interminable tales were I to challenge them to a marathon of story telling. Rummage lore is as inexhaustible as it is interesting, and as interesting as human nature itself. However, as a customer I am not exactly an asset. I have not yet collected a single article—animal, vegetable, or mineral—only human interest stories which, to me, have a much more satisfying value than all the rummage in the City of San Francisco.

AUTUMN

By Justine Weiher

*Gay Autumn! Whisper in drowsy summer's ear
To leave and take her dry delirium
That earth may wake when you at last are here.
Then stay awhile, don't let drab winter come.
Show me your taste for gay, flamboyant frills:
Spray your gold and purple on each mount;
Race through the valleys, and enflame the hills
In colors more than I can ever count.
Bring glowing days, black nights, and rosy dusk;
Send grey mists creeping with a sweet perfume
Of honeysuckle, jasmine, and wild musk
Up to the open windows of my room.
Bring all this harmony of color,—scent,
And be the crown—the late year's ornament.*

SONNET

By Milania Austin

*I wonder now when first my soul conceived
The first small seed of love, what impetus
Removed the wall of self, what part received
The root of thought and bore beneath the dust
Of fear the embryo of mental sight.
And I recall how oft I glimpsed in others,
By outward signs, that inward God-like light,
And yet remained my soul in its own tethers.
Perhaps the gentle thrust of sacrifice
Prepared it all unknowing, for the seed,
Removed the vice-like bonds of selfishness
So I could turn and see my self, now freed.
My soul then saw its own receptive state,
Conceived the seed of love; my will now governs fate.*

ARRIVEDERCI! (Till We Meet Again!)

By Diane D'Alfonso

Our nineteen-hundred-and-twenty-four vintage taxi careened down the ever twisting, dusty road. The driver paid little heed to the chuck holes as he gestured wildly indicating points of interest to my father. We shuddered to an abrupt stop and our driver spoke rapid Italian to two small boys. They indicated a narrow road as they turned astonished brown eyes at the pile of matched luggage.

The car struggled slowly over a trail a goat would have difficulty in climbing. My mother and I gripped the seat, praying silently. Ruts and rattles and rocks surrounded us as the driver maneuvered the car toward a stone quarry. A small plateau loomed ahead. We snaked our way through hay stacks until the road narrowed to a sheep path. My father studied every detail of the rock pile below us. The dust settled and the misshapen rocks took the form of houses. I stared. Was this Prata?

"Alessandro, Alessandro."

My father was surrounded by his sisters and their families. They embraced him and cried, then turned to my mother and kissed her and cried again. Numerous children came forward and were introduced to their American "Zio" and "Zia."

I sat in the car amazed and disillusioned. This must be Prata! These people must be the relatives I had come to meet! It couldn't be possible! Our family descended from the Tarquin kings of early Rome, my father was a marquis.

"Diana?"

"Si," I answered falteringly. Alphonsina, a cousin my own age, called me, pulled me from the taxi, and directed me into the arms of my kissing aunts. After hearing countless unpronounceable names and meeting unfamiliar faces, I found myself led toward the cluster of homes. Alphonsina smiled and rattled on in Italian. I was having too much difficulty keeping my balance on the steep rock steps which serve as streets in Prata, to politely say, "Non parlo italiano."

I followed the crowd into a small courtyard. The gate clanged shut and, to my mind, not only the village disappeared but also hope of relief. Out the gate—to the car—up the road—into Rome—on the plane, I would be home in America. However, at a tug on my sleeve by my cousin, I lifted my head and climbed over a sleeping dog and walked toward the noises made by many more relations. As

the group surged toward seats, Ettore and Attilio, two of my cousins, shooed chickens into the yard. I sat surrounded by cousins who barraged me with questions while sipping a glass of wine. My mother explained that I did not speak or understand their language. Their faces saddened as they looked at me. To avoid their compassionate gaze, I turned to the screenless window.

This was Prata D'Ansiondia. This was the village, the house in which my father had been born and reared before his teen-age journey to the United States. Prata D'Ansiondia, a small village which dated back to the seventeenth century and which was located in the mountainous region of central Italy in the section known as the Abruzzi. This was the Prata about which my father had so often reminisced—the house overlooking the village, the valley with its fertile farmland, the delicious spring water that could not be found anywhere else, and the scenic majesty of the Abruzzi with its rocky grandeur, white-topped Gran Sasso, and green valleys.

All his reminiscence had created a longing in my heart to visit Prata and Italy. Each spring we would make plans, reserve a place on a ship, buy new clothes for the trip but, always, my father would have to remain in Santa Barbara to finish a school or a factory or a house. Consequently, each summer I spent my vacation working for my father and with him built dreams of the Italy I wanted to see. And now, my father was here, proudly introducing his daughter to his sisters.

“Diane, andare?”

The soft pronunciation of my name brought me back to reality. “Andare” meant “to walk.” Walk! I looked down at my new Ferragamo shoes, felt my silk dress, and smiled feebly. Alphonsina understood my position and asked Ettore to bring in my suitcase. I changed to denim shoes and skirt. This outfit became my Prata uniform as it was the only practical thing I had.

No one noticed as we left the house except the dog stretched across the door. My mother walked ahead with Maria and Vincensina holding her hands, Elena tugging at her skirt, and Ettore and Attilio tripping as they showed off. Alphonsina gripped my arm and strode up the rock path. Although the dust swirled up and rocks slipped from under my feet, the excitement of the children became contagious. I smiled for the first time at Alphonsina as we reached the spring.

The water came from the side of a rock grotto and flowed into a long trough, which was covered by a lean-to type, tile roof. Women were bending over the trough scrubbing and washing. My mother explained that this was the village “laundromat.” The wash was begun at the far end of the trough and as the clothes became cleaner, the women would rotate toward the source of the spring. I was still

staring at this primitive method of washing when I noticed a village girl walking toward the spring. I watched her fill a large copper pot with water, balance it on her head, and make her way back down the hillside. This quaint scene which was silhouetted against the background of a medieval castle brought back the world of history books to me—women washing in a running stream, chickens and flies occupying houses, water being carried from its source, a dog sleeping in front of the kitchen fire. I looked about expecting a knight on a white charger to swoop me up and take me to the castle.

The women at the spring wrapped their clean clothes in a sheet, tied a huge knot, and lifted the bundle to their heads. The coolness of the mountain air reminded us that we, also, should start down the hillside. My mother and I precariously made our way down the narrow path until we reached the hay stack, the barn, the house. The friendly circle of lights, the warm voices made me welcome and the strangeness I had felt a few hours before left me.

Zia Concetta left my father's side reluctantly, came toward us, and mentioned dinner. My mother informed her of my love for the provincial dish of the Abruzzi. In a few minutes my aunts and cousins were working over an open fire making Gnocchi. Potatoes were mashed, mixed with flour and water, cut in small squares, placed in boiling water for three minutes, and covered with sauce. The result—Gnocchi.

Dinner was a lengthy affair. Not because of the number of courses, but because there were twenty-two years of separation to be discussed while we ate home-made salami, gnocchi, fagiolini (cold string beans with olive oil), large pieces of brown bread, and wine. It wasn't like the meals at home or at boarding school, yet it fitted in with what I dreamed of the medieval. Even the flies which formed a black mound over an open plate did not disturb me—a bacteriology major.

After three hours of unintelligible conversation, I excused myself and walked out to the courtyard. Ettore and Alphonsina followed me. We sat side by side, quietly smoking the American cigarettes which Ettore insisted contained opium. The clear, brisk air, the golden moon, the soft movement of the sheep, the silence of the living world strengthened the relationship between us. The language barrier seemed unnecessary at this moment, yet, I regretted my refusing the opportunities to learn Italian and Spanish, my parents' native languages.

The calm atmosphere of medieval romance was suddenly changed when the wind and the rain came upon us from the Gran Sasso. We ran to the house where warmth of excited relations enfolded me. The thunder and lightning had not been noticed by the excited conversationalists in the combination kitchen-dining-living room.

Alphonsina showed me the room we were to share. The single, conspicuous light bulb dangling from the ceiling outlined the straw mattress, the old comforter, the tripod with its basin and pitcher, the tile floor. As I washed myself in the cold water, Alphonsina whispered to me, gave me a key, and indicated a direction. My mother and I groped our way down the narrow path, fought a rusty, noisy lock, and entered the barn. No apologies were made for the lack of modern plumbing.

Morning arrived with the freshness of the mountains. I was surprised to find that I had slept ten peaceful hours on the uncomfortable straw mattress. I entered the kitchen with the thought of a cup of coffee. My mother left the children and managed to dilute the black Italian coffee to American taste. Even so, my idea of breakfast was not dark, bitter coffee and stale brown bread.

Alphonsina and I sat outside on two convenient rocks and talked. She knew no English but some German; I knew no Italian but some German. Our conversation soon became a series of tri-lingual sentences. I found that she was twenty-two years old and planning to enter the University of Rome as a pre-med major. I told her of my college in California and of my hopes to become a medical technologist.

Attilio came running and jumping up the path waving a letter and a package and yelling my name. I retired to a hay stack to read a letter from a friend and to look with home-sick eyes through my college annual. All my cousins crowded around and wanted to see the pictures. After ordering the younger ones to wash their hands and getting my mother as an interpreter, I showed them the book as they gaped with wonderment.

We had been in Prata for two days, before my father voiced his wish to see the "valle." This was a valley about four miles from Prata which he owned. We started early with our movie camera as a weapon and relations as escorts. The rocky path led up to the castle which, at one time, was owned by the feudal lord of the territory. Now its ruins served as a shelter for people in extreme poverty. My father and I explored the once prosperous buildings and grounds as the present inhabitants stared at us and murmured. I left the castle with a prayer of thanksgiving that I had been born an American.

We returned stumbling over a narrow path past a German camping ground, into the woods, beyond the tree line, down to the valley. The best farm land of the community was located in this "valle," which measured two hundred yards wide and one mile long. The soil was rocky and of clay-like texture yet, produced corn, wheat, grapes, and beans. My father tramped from end to end, stopping to shake almonds from the trees, to look at the grape vines, and to talk briefly with my uncles who were turning the soil with a large wooden fork dragged by oxen.

We heard a "chiamare" from the far end of the valley. We turned to see Zia Anna Dominica cross the newly-plowed earth with a load of fire wood balanced on her head. My small aunt was years younger than my mother but looked much older. She told me the fire-wood was a small bundle compared to those carried during the harvesting. During that season, the women would carry the "minestra," "polenta," and "vino" to the men three times daily from Prata. I could picture my cousins, with Zia Anna Dominica at their lead, walking single file the rough path balancing huge, filled copper pots.

I joined my cousins in climbing the high peak over-looking Prata. Scattered on the green next to the slash of highway were white patches where the women were bleaching their hand woven linens, in the sun. From my vantage point I felt like Gulliver gazing on the village of Lilliputians. We joined my parents again and circled the village to the main corn field. Ettore and Attilio went ahead and built a small fire where we roasted large ears of corn, freshly plucked.

With each passing day, I experienced something new and equally exciting. We climbed to the ruins of the Church of San Paolo with its narrow hidden tunnel which led to the hiding place of the early Christians. My father showed me where as a child he had carved his name on a ruined altar and where my brother carved his on a war-time visit to Prata. I climbed to the place and inscribed "Diana D'Alfonso, figlia di Alessandro D'Alfonso, 1951."

The night before I left, Zia Anna Dominica invited us to her home for dinner. It was here that I met Remo. He had just arrived from Pescara where he had spent his vacation. His familiarity with the English language and his similarity to the Hollywood actor, Tony Curtis, attracted me to him. But soon the evening was over, I was leaving in the morning. The thought of leaving no longer appealed to me. I wished that I could have stayed as my parents had planned.

The next morning as I entered the kitchen I found Remo speaking to my parents. When he finished he came over to me with an air of assurance and asked me to marry him. I stared, exchanged pictures with him, promised to write, and said that we had better wait two years.

With an Italian slowness we walked to the plateau. The taxi was waiting to take me to Rome. In two days I would be registering for classes, thanks to T.W.A. I turned to each cousin, each aunt, and Remo, repeating the promise that in two years I would be back.

"Arrivederci."

The taxi made its way through the hay stacks to the narrow road. The dust, the bumps went unnoticed as I watched houses turn into rocks. I huddled in the seat and cried.

The Bird Flies South

By Jean Ellen Walsh

"Nancy, we're coming to the stop."

"Can you see her?"

"Yes." Helen hunched herself closer to the window.

"Well?"

"Too far away to tell. Nancy, move over and give me some room!"

Nancy hitched herself back to her own side of the seat in disgust. "I thought you said you could see her," she accused.

"I meant I can see the bench and some figures. That's about all. Do you still say she's got it on?"

"Of course. Stop trying to back out of the bet, Helen!"

"I'm not backing out. It's just natural to suppose that she won't still be wearing it—after the holidays and everything. Nancy, your labels sticking out." Helen touched the flap of Nancy's scarf and turned back to the window.

Nancy slowly untied the scarf, tucked the label out of sight, and then settled the scarf in place again. "You know, I think it's just as natural to suppose she's still wearing it. Up to Christmas vacation, she hadn't missed a day sporting that—thing. If you want to back down and . . ."

"I see her now," broke in Helen.

Both girls pressed against the window, straining to see which of them had won the bet. The bus slanted toward the curb and Nancy sat back in satisfaction.

"She's got it on, Helen. Pay up!"

"All right. You can wait a minute, can't you? I did think she'd have changed it," mourned Helen.

"You're not kidding. You'd think that someone would have given her a new one for Christmas—just to put the old bird out of its misery," laughed Nancy.

"Shh, she'll hear you," Helen cautioned her friend.

"Don't be a dope! She can't hear from up there. Will you look at it wave!" Nancy elbowed Helen to watch the scene in the front of the bus.

Miss Carmody nodded to the driver, trickled her fare down the coin chute and balanced her way along the aisle till she could safely lower both herself and her bulky briefcase into a seat.

It was a relief for her to feel the cushioned leather against her back instead of the unyielding board of the bench. Louise Carmody settled her briefcase in the niche between the metal-ribbed wall and the seat and began reading the signs which lined the sides of the bus. She noticed with relish that the advertisements had been

changed during the holidays and reading them, she thought as she always did, that advertising was truly amazing.

"Why if I had enough money and less sense, I'd be buying everything they put in front of me, necessary or not."

Miss Carmody smiled at the thought of herself in the two-piece turquoise creation stationed just opposite her seat. Swiveling as far as dignity would permit, to follow the row of ads, she saw Nancy and Helen and smiled.

"Nancy and Ellen. Or is it Helen? They seem to be such nice girls. You don't find many young girls nowadays who take an interest in older folks. They always look to smile or speak. So friendly. You can see the kind of training they get at home. Good family always shows through. I must get to know some of the girls better but it's such a large class. Ellen? Yes, I think it's Ellen." Miss Carmody leaned back and reflected on the younger generation.

The bus slid to a quick stop and the briefcase vanished. Miss Carmody doubled over and fingered for it till, at last, she came up dusty and with her hat tilted to a perilous degree. Depositing the truant beside her on the seat, she brushed at her coat and then carefully removed her hat.

"It seems to be all right." She visibly relaxed as she searched for any evidence of damage and found everything intact from the sober base to the marvelous creature poised for flight on the brim's curving runway.

Louise Carmody stared at the tiny jeweled eyes and the faded blue feathers, thinking of the first time she had ever held the bird.

Ever since she could remember, there had been the bird. When she was very small, she had seen it floating gaily atop her mother's "special hat"—the hat she wore for the wonderful parties. She would stretch and stretch, trotting along beside her mother and trying to watch the bird. But she could never make him look down at her. The bright eyes always scanned the horizon, the head arched with the luminous feathers folded just so. When she was very little, she thought he would fly away some day, as the other birds did but he was still staring into the distance, closeted in the ornate hat box, the night her mother died.

When she was older, the bird belonged to her sister, Edith. Once again, it sallied forth to gay parties but now its feet were rooted in another hat, secured by Edith's precise stitches.

When she was ten, Louise had first touched the bird. Edith was in her sitting room, sewing. She had cut him loose from his moorings, preparatory to sewing him on a new, more modish perch. Louise had asked if she might look at him and Edith had told her to be careful with him. Occupied with selecting just the right color of thread, Edith had said nothing to Louise when she carried him out into the hall, down the stairs, and out onto the front porch.

The sun had been brilliant. His feathers cast back the light and

Louise had sat on the top step, holding him almost reverently when Hannah burst around the corner of the house. Hannah had stood still for a while, uncertain what to do for she had never spoken to the little girl who lived in the house. Then, she had seen the shining thing which Louise held so carefully and she had come forward to see what it was. The sight of the magnificent bird had driven away all shyness and she dropped down on the step, dirty knees and scuffed shoes stuck straight out ahead of her.

Louise found that she could even remember the dialogue of that scene.

"Ooh, it's pretty! Is it yours?"

"No, it belongs to my sister."

Louise remembered how much that admission had cost her.

"What's it for?"

"For on a hat—a special hat. My sister only wears it for parties. She's going to put it on a new hat she has. You should see it."

"I never saw anything so pretty," Hannah had confided. "Could I . . . could I hold it?"

Louise had glanced from the small brown hands to the blue feathers. She had wondered if Edith would be angry but a surge of friendliness had made her place the bird in Hannah's outstretched hands.

A moment later, the bird had been snatched from Hannah and Edith stood above them on the porch.

"I told you to be careful, Louise. You had no right to leave the sitting room. I have also told you not to bother the servants—or their children. Now, come inside immediately!"

Louise had followed her sister into the house and left the little figure on the porch.

Thinking back, she could recall having seen Hannah again, playing in the yard or helping her mother fold the freshly washed clothes.

She and the bird had grown older. She had graduated from grammar school, then high school and finally, college. The bird had graduated from one hat to another until when she finished college, he had been retired to a box in the closet.

Louise remembered the strange look on her sister's face when she had asked if she might have him, since Edith had no further use for him. Edith had laughed and told her not to be childish. She had said that she might use the bird later and the matter was forgotten.

Now, Edith Carmody was dead and the bird belonged to Louise. She had sewn it on a plain black hat and when she put it on, each morning, she felt a sense of exhilaration.

"I suppose people think I'm—cheap, always wearing this same hat. Maybe they think I'm eccentric. I wouldn't blame them if they do, but I'm happy the way I am. Edith always said that if something was good, you didn't have to apologize for the number of times you wore it."

Comforting herself with that thought, Miss Carmody smoothed the pale feathers carefully so that she wouldn't dislodge any and considered the advisability of attempting to dye the bird.

"No, I won't try it. I'm too attached to you to try any experiments." She stared into the jeweled eyes which seemed to be focused on some distant scene. Then she placed the hat atop her head, lanced a hatpin through the back of it, and reached for her briefcase.

The remainder of the ride to school was consumed in checking test papers. At last, the driver called out the familiar street and Miss Carmody stuffed her papers into the briefcase and hurried up the aisle. The driver started to say something about using the rear door but then he smiled instead.

As Miss Carmody followed the others across the street, she thought, "It was the hat, I think. It surprised him so that he couldn't find the voice to scold me. Well, all the new drivers get used to it. He will, too." Miss Carmody congratulated herself on her sense of humor and mounted the high curb.

The walk to the school was short but invigorating. Several times, she noticed that Nancy and Helen turned to look at her and again she resolved to get to know them better.

Up ahead of the teacher, Nancy was on the verge of having a convulsion. "Helen, look back! Isn't it funny?"

Helen stared ahead. "I don't think it's that funny, Nancy. After all, she is our teacher."

"We're not hurting her, but I think that bird is a riot. Don't you think it's about time for it to take off and fly south?" laughed Nancy, pulling open the side door of the school building.

Helen didn't answer and Nancy continued, "At least, we don't have to face the thing until third period. Sometimes, I think I can't look that bird in the eye. I'm going to my locker. See you in class. Oh, good morning, Miss Carmody."

Louise smiled once again as she passed the two girls in the hall and began climbing the stairs to her room. The walk had been brisk and the warmth of the building felt good. She paused before the drinking fountain just outside her door and took a long drink. Then, she pulled open the door to Room 104 and entered the world she had made for herself. The janitor had opened the blinds and the room seemed very cheerful. A gleam of sunlight caught the polished bust of Shakespeare and picked out a framed copy of the Gettysburg Address. The room was almost smothered with examples of the best in English literature.

Miss Carmody struggled out of her heavy coat, unwound her woolen muffler, pulled off her gloves and then put everything in its proper place. Finally, she removed her hat and laid it on the stand which had been vacated ever since a pupil had sent Dante crashing to the floor.

She was emptying the contents of her briefcase when Mr. Duncan opened the door. Miss Carmody always thought that he was one man who looked his role of principal.

"Miss Carmody." He advanced toward the desk and she wondered what she had done.

"Miss Carmody, I wonder if I might ask a very important favor of you?"

"Oh, yes!" She was enthusiastic, in her relief.

"Fine. Miss Ingram is ill today. Ordinarily, I would turn her period into a study session and leave a student in charge. However, Miss Ingram had set up a date at the hospital today. The class is to be shown around through the children's wing, I believe. It has all been arranged as a special favor to us and we can't back out, now. Would you take the class down to the hospital this morning?"

"But what about my morning classes? I . . ."

"We can couple your classes with Mr. Davidson's. We'll work something out. All you have to do is accompany the class. One of the doctors or nurses is going to conduct the tour. If you'd rather not go, please tell me. I thought that you would be such a responsible guide and I think you'll be interested, yourself."

"No, I've no objection. When shall we be leaving?"

"We've gotten the use of some cars which will be here at nine."

After issuing a few more instructions, Mr. Duncan left the room and Miss Carmody began the process of getting ready. She felt as though the principal had purposely disrupted her day.

It was a ruffled Miss Carmody who, at nine o'clock, climbed into one of the cars waiting outside the school and found herself heading for Briarfield Hospital.

The drive was not a long one and soon she and the class were waiting in a reception room for their guide.

A young intern passed by in the hall and then retracing his steps, stuck his head in at the door. "Are you my class? Miss Ingram here?" He scanned the group of faces.

Miss Carmody cleared her throat and moved forward. "I am Miss Carmody. I'm filling in for Miss Ingram who is ill."

The young intern nodded and then smiled. "I'm sorry to hear about the other teacher but I'm very glad to welcome the rest of you." He turned to include the class. "I'm Gerald Norton. Now I'm just an intern so don't make the questions too hard. Miss Carmody, I think that the best plan will be for us to play 'follow the leader.' We'll form a long line and I'll try to talk loud enough so that everyone can hear me." With that, he wheeled out of the room and down a long corridor.

The morning was a confusion of white walls, queer smells, starched uniforms, and miles of corridors to Miss Carmody. Gerald Norton had an unfailing supply of energy and very long legs. If she hadn't liked him immediately, Louise would have felt resentful.

After demonstrating the intricacies of raising and lowering a bed

to exactly the right angle, three times, Gerald announced that it was time for lunch.

The meal was delicious and Louise began to take an interest in her surroundings. For the first time, she noticed Nancy and Helen at the farther end of the table. She hoped that the class had gotten more out of the morning inspection than she had.

"I'll pay attention from now on if only my feet keep quiet," she resolved.

Gerald turned to her. "Do you think you're ready to go again? We'll take it easier from now on. I wanted you to see as much as possible and I know that I've really kept you going. The next and last stop is the children's ward. Ready?"

Louise said that she was, and the procession formed once more.

The children's ward was large yet Louise had a sense of too many children crowded into too little space. They moved through a number of glassed partitions, Gerald explaining as they went along.

At last, he stopped before a partition and turned to the group. "The children in this section have tuberculosis. Most of them are getting well, not all. The one little girl, she's right next to the window, is being moved to another hospital down south. The money was given to us to use for the neediest child so we chose little Ann. Well, we might as well go on in." He pushed open the door and they filed past him.

The features were all different but somehow, to the teacher, all the children looked alike until they came to Ann's bed. Gerald said a few words to her and then moved on with the group, up the other side of the room but Miss Carmody stood staring at the little child. The face was pinched and the color was bad but Miss Carmody knew that Ann had once been brown—with dirty knees, perhaps.

Ann was looking at her intently and the teacher walked closer to the bed. Then, she saw that Ann's eyes were focused on her hat in fascination.

Louise Carmody smiled. Perhaps the sight of the bird could make the little girl laugh. She didn't look as though she had laughed in a long time. She leaned over the side of the bed. "Would you like to see the bird, dear? Do you think he's funny?"

Ann drew a deep breath. "Oh, he's so pretty! Can I pet him?"

Miss Carmody pulled out the hatpin and lifting it off, she laid the hat in Ann's hands.

The thin fingers stroked the feathers, gently. "I never saw anything so pretty. The doctor says I'm going to South. I don't know where that is but do you think they have pretty birds like this in South?"

Miss Carmody stared at the earnest face for a long moment before she reached for the hat and began ripping at the stitches which fettered the Carmody bird. "I know that there will be one bird like this in 'South,' Ann. Here! You'll take good care of him, I know."

Ann laid him on the pillow. "Oh thank you! He's just . . . what's his name? Would you mind if I named him? Oh, thank you!"

Louise Carmody walked down the row of beds and waved to Ann just before she pulled open the door that led to the main hall. The class was farther down the corridor and as she walked toward them, she thought, "I never even gave him a name. I guess he'll do more good in a sick bed than flying from the masts of women's hats. Wouldn't Edith be furious!" Miss Carmody warmed to the thought.

Gerald hailed her. "We thought you'd gotten lost."

Nancy was transfixed. "Miss Carmody, your bird's come off," she gasped.

Louise thought of the jeweled eyes which had seemed to wink at Ann with such mischief and friendliness.

She looked at Nancy. "No, he isn't lost. He's just getting ready to fly south."

Alumnae News

Wedding invitations received at "The Mount" tell us of the marriage of: Claire Cecelia Hannin to Mr. Emory Douglas Mallek in St. Brendan's Church, Los Angeles; Angela Catherine McDonald to Mr. Gay John Kay in St. John's Church, Los Angeles; Joan Elizabeth Murphy to Mr. Phillip H. Maechling in Sacred Heart Church, Klamath Falls, Oregon; Marie Therese Astier to Lt. Edward Francis Devine, Jr. in St. Peter's Church, Los Angeles; Marion Louise Hills to Mr. Richard Cornwall Farrell in Saint Monica's Church, Santa Monica; Patricia Becker to Mr. Richard James O'Brien in the Church of St. John the Evangelist, Los Angeles; Gloria Marie Putnam to Mr. Robert George Stoica in St. Finbar's Church, Los Angeles; Grace Stark to Mr. John Philip Holcomb in Holy Spirit Church, Los Angeles; Mary Ann McCarthy to Mr. Robert Lauriston in Mt. Carmel Church, Redwood City, Calif.

Announcements of new arrivals in our alumnae families are:

To John and Mary Dolores Flynn Lawson a boy, John Spence, Jr.

To George and Helene Perry Trammel a girl, Christine.

To Frank and Charlotte Aguiar Seyer, a boy, Francis Manuel.

To David and Claire Kassler Gaffney, a girl, Mary Claire.

To John and Gina De Coursey Sinsky, a boy, Jerome Lawrence.

To Harold and Edalyn Ewall Pfost, a boy, Richard Alan.

To Don and Adelaide Spuhler Mealey, a boy, Mark Francis.

To Tom and Betty Swift Walmsley, a boy, Michael Thomas.

To Kirby and Pat Gisler Galt, a girl, Christine.

To Ralph and Lois O'Connell Bruneau, a boy, Ralph Eugene III.

To Woody and Margaret Moore Hodgson, a girl, Kathleen Marie.

To John and Genevieve Weeger Smurda, a girl, Claire Marie.

To John and Patricia Spencler Terzian, a boy.

To Robert and Mary Louise Lernihan LeBonge, a boy, Robert.

To Benjamin and Uzo Moneke Mbakwem, a boy, Benjamin—but called "Chukwuma," Nigerian for "God takes care of His own."

Ben and Uzo are now living in Ottawa where Ben is in medical school at the University of Ottawa.